

THE CASE OF THE MISSING EMU



Chapter 3

‘Alright, let’s look at what we’ve discovered so far?’ Mila said. ‘We’ve learnt the importance of the words in the Australian National Anthem and the way that symbols represent meanings on our flags. These both relate to Australia, but what could come next?’

‘Maybe Emu wants us to learn more about the things that make Australia special?’ Kai responded. ‘I’m sure there are loads of ways that our country is unique. Any ideas, Kangaroo?’

Kangaroo looked around. ‘Yes, there are so many wonderful symbols that represent our country. They can be found right across our vast land. Take this Golden Wattle for instance,’ Kangaroo said, pointing to the

green and gold flowering plant in a nearby garden. ‘It’s Australia’s national floral emblem.’

‘What’s an emblem?’ asked Kai.

‘It’s just a fancy word for a symbol that represents a country,’ Kangaroo answered. ‘Our floral emblem is the wattle because not only does it display our national colours of green and gold, but it’s also an important part of our history. Australian Aboriginal peoples used wattle as a source of food and shelter, and for hunting tools, musical instruments and medicine. Wattle has been in the lives of every Australian who has lived in this land.’

‘Look!’ said Mila, peering at the tree trunk. There is a sticky note on it with the letter **R**. If green and gold are our national colours, perhaps they will lead us to the next clue.’

Kai, Mila and Kangaroo looked around. In the garden next to the wattle, stood a washing line with clothes drying in the hot afternoon sun. Right in the middle of the line hung a green and gold football jersey.



'Over there, another note!' Mila exclaimed, pointing to the jersey.

In one powerful jump, Kangaroo hopped over the garden fence and retrieved the note. Returning to Mila and Kai, they all looked at it. This time, the letter **A** was written.

'Kangaroo, why are our national colours green and gold?' Kai asked. 'Why didn't they choose colours from our special flags?'

'Lots of people wonder that,' Kangaroo said to Kai. 'It's because gold, or yellow, conjures images of Australia's beaches, minerals, grain harvests and the fleece of Australian wool. Green represents the forests, eucalyptus trees and the Australian landscape.'

'I'd never thought of it like that before,' he replied. 'Surely we must be getting close now?'

Kai gathered the notes and put them in his pocket with the others. 'It's almost dinner and we are running out of time.'

'Let's put our heads together and think,' Mila instructed. 'Emu has left us clues on symbols that represent Australia. We've had a tree and our national colours. Are there any other symbols we are missing, Kangaroo?'

'Well, there is one more very important one. Our national gemstone, the opal,' Kangaroo answered. 'It's famous across the world for its brilliant colours. In Indigenous stories, a rainbow created the colours of the opal when it touched the earth. It's also known as the *fire of the desert* and is a powerful symbol of Australia's dry desert lands. Has either of you ever seen one?'

'Ooh, yes,' Mila cried. 'My grandma has a beautiful brooch with a white opal. It shines like a rainbow when the sun catches it.'

'I've never seen one,' said Kai, sadly. 'I'd love to have a look one day.'

'Perhaps it could help us with the next clue,' Mila replied. 'My grandma only lives a few streets from here. Why don't we go and take a look now? She wears it every day and I'm sure she'd love to show you. It seems



we've reached a dead end here anyway?'

They all agreed this was a good plan and set off at a run, and a hop. As they approached the house, Kai pointed to an object on the floor near the letterbox.

'Hey, what's that?' he asked. 'It's catching the light, look at all the colours. It's beautiful!'

'I can't believe it,' Mila cried. She rushed over and picked it up. 'It's my grandma's brooch! It must have fallen from her blouse when she collected the mail. Wow, she will be so grateful we found it.'

'And look at the letterbox,' shouted Kai in excitement, as he pulled another sticky note from the opening. 'The letter **E**.'

'But we've almost run out of time,' declared Kangaroo. 'The sun is setting and we haven't seen Emu all afternoon. Oh, what are we going to do?'

'Well, we have so many letters,' said Mila gently. 'Let's sit down in my grandma's house and see if we can put

them all together. I'm sure the three of us can figure out Emu's message if we work together!'

